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Nurturing Attachments Training Resource: Running parenting groups for adoptive parents and foster or kinship carers

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Book Review

Nurturing Attachments Training Resource: Running Parenting Groups for Adoptive Parents and Foster or Kinship Carers

KIM GOLDING London, Jessica Kingsley, 2014; 334 pp., ISBN 9781849053280 (pbk)

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Helping adoptive parents and carers to develop secure and positive attachments with the children in their care is no easy task, so a step-by-step guide to doing this really appealed to our team. Group parenting work was something which we hadn't undertaken previously, so the team was very enthusiastic about using Kim Golding's guidebook to run our first group for adoptive parents. The group consisted of adopters at all stages of the process; from dually approved carers, who had a child recently placed for adoption, to adoptive parents of older teenagers.

Overall, *Nurturing Attachments Training Resource* is a very comprehensive guidebook, detailing the practicalities of running groups, including how much disclosure should be permitted, how to deal with challenges such as safeguarding concerns or managing a group member who talks too much. It also summarises the most recent research and the main knowledge base related to attachment theory, therapeutic parenting, increasing empathy and building a secure base. Kim's 'House Model of Parenting' and Dan Hughes' 'PACE Model' (Golding & Hughes, 2012) are both outlined and explained in a comprehensive way.

In running the group, we found that we had a lot to do ourselves before each session to translate the theory into language that suited our group of adoptive parents and the local dialect. The book also encourages the facilitators to access their own video clips for the group. Whilst Kim's book mentions a number of sources of clips, most come with a payable fee, so due to budget restrictions we had to use clips available on YouTube. There are some excellent clips available illustrating the intricacies of parent-child attachment, but gathering these was time-consuming.

The book is a little hard to follow in some parts, because at times a topic was covered at the start of a chapter and again at another place in the chapter. There are hand-outs and activity sheets available on an enclosed CD-ROM which are very helpful. The book discourages the use of PowerPoint slides, but nevertheless, our team decided to use them in order to prompt us as facilitators, and also to better reinforce the theory covered. We did not feel this distracted too much from the reflective and discursive nature of the group.

The evaluations at the end of the group revealed very positive feedback from all of the members. In particular, they mentioned the content of the programme and how much of it helped them to understand their child's emotional world and manage behavioural

challenges. They also discussed the importance of meeting other adoptive parents in the same situation and having a chance to reflect on their struggles as a group.

Overall, the Nurturing Attachments Training Resource is a useful guide for setting up and running attachment-focused groups for adoptive parents, foster and kinship carers. Facilitators would need to have a good prior knowledge of attachment theory in order to deliver the programme effectively, and therefore it may be most useful for psychologists, psychotherapists and social workers with therapeutic training. The group can bring up quite strong dynamics, and facilitators would need some awareness of topics such as transference, projection and splitting in groups in order to best manage when these arise. A significant amount of extra time would need to be available for preparation so that the facilitators are very familiar with the content, have time to prepare slides or hand-out summaries, find video clips and become able to answer questions which group members may have. In general, this a very useful resource and a very significant contribution to post-adoption and foster/kinship carer supports.

Reference:

Golding, K.S. & Hughes, D.A. (2012) *Creating Loving Attachments. Parenting with PACE to Nurture Confidence and Security in the Troubled Child*. London: Jessica Kingsley.